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personnel have had to assume those duties in the day-to-day operation of the complex, he explained.

In 1978 Curtis had to file a Section 11 bankruptcy suit because of the decline in income and mounting debts sustained by the attraction. The court gave him three years to pay off his debts which amounted to almost \$90,000.

It was during this time of personal and financial difficulties that Curtis turned to Jesus Christ. "I made Jesus the 'chairman of my board of directors,'" he explained. He credits this action for his ability to pay off his creditors in two years instead of the three years allotted by the court. Curtis' final settlement in the bankruptcy suit was completed just last week. "I cheered," he said. "No man (alone) could have done it."

Masterpiece Gardens is scheduled to be auctioned off on Feb. 16. The proceedings will be conducted by Martin Higgenbotham, a Lakeland auctioneer and realtor. Curtis' advisors and representatives in the matter are Norm White, his personal attorney from Lake Wales, and Robert Bertrand, a tax lawyer from Lakeland.

According to Curtis, the grounds will be divided into 21 separate parcels of various sizes and sold individually if no single purchaser wants to buy the entire attraction. He thinks that condominium developers may show an interest in some of the land because of its lakefront, seclusion and, of course, beautiful surroundings. "But who knows what will happen," he added.

The attraction, located several miles off of US 27 just north of Lake Wales, will remain open to visitors until about a week before the auction date.